

Restore. Rebuild. Regreen

January 2023



Sand Dams Worldwide is a UK registered charity that supports some of the world's poorest people to transform their own lives and land.

We support communities in rural drylands to build sand dams, which provide **clean water for life for just £15 per person** and help to restore degraded land, rebuild livelihoods and regreen environments.

Our goal is to enable **1 million sand dams by 2050, bringing clean water to 0.5 billion people.**

www.sanddamsworldwide.org.uk

Charity number: 1094478



What's inside?

Community members supported by Sand Dams Worldwide share how sand dams and clean water have enabled them to transform their own lives and land.



Creating self-sufficiency

Hear from some Kenyan farmers who are now able to dictate their own futures thanks to sand dams.



Overcoming adversity

Despite many setbacks Fachi and Diana from Malawi are now enjoying the benefits of their sand dam project.



Bringing unity and peace

Varies from Zimbabwe shares how having clean water close to home has been a life changing experience.



Regreening drylands

Ethiopian farmer Bergi explains what an impact a sand dam has had on her community's local environment.

Transforming lives

Creating self-sufficiency

A key element of our approach at Sand Dams Worldwide is that the communities we work with are supported to become self-sufficient. We spoke with a group in Kenya to find out how their ability to dictate their own futures has changed as a result of completing their sand dams.

Located in Makueni county, southeast Kenya, the Athiani Farmers self-help group (SHG) have been working towards improving their food and water security through the construction of sand dams. In the past, the community experienced serious challenges being based in an arid area with unreliable rains and frequent prolonged droughts.

Many members of the community had long abandoned the prospect of more reliable and profitable farming due to a lack of adequate water, while levels of hygiene and sanitation had deteriorated as water scarcity forced people to choose between washing and drinking. For children, time that would normally be spent in school was spent in the search for water, this task often leading them to seasonal rivers several miles from home.

However, the community persevered in their efforts to find solutions to these problems. They began working with Sand Dams Worldwide and our partners in the region, the Africa Sand Dam Foundation, on ways to overcome their challenges. The community have since become self-reliant and developed sustainable practices to help them make the most of their resources, enjoying the benefits that come with sand dams, notably a reliable and nearby supply of clean water that can

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We very much enjoy having this clean water, which is available always.

Dorothy Mutwi'wa,
Athiani Farmers SHG,
Kenya

”

be utilised for domestic as well as farming purposes.

Dorothy Mutwi'wa, 59, testifies for the benefits of constructing sand dams in the area: *“Getting a reliable source of clean water for household use, farming, and watering livestock has become so easy since the project was implemented. We are delighted.”*

Esther Wayua, 70, remembers very well how difficult life was when they hadn't much water in the community. However, she now beams with happiness as she celebrates the joy the sand dams have brought: *“We are elated that all we have to do is walk a short distance in order to get clean water for household uses and for our livestock. We are also able to use it for irrigating our crops.”*

Members of the group can now share optimism for the future as they work to regain opportunities stolen from them by the adverse effects of extreme water scarcity, while children can now dedicate their full attention to their studies. A visit to the group was greeted with beaming smiles, as the members of the Athiani Farmers SHG expressed their gratitude for the support that enabled them to complete their sand dam projects and become self-sufficient.



Dorothy Mutwi'wa and Esther Wayua collecting clean water close to their homes.

Feeding families, fighting disease

Fachi and Diana: overcoming adversity

The community of Nyanthumbi, in Nsanje, Malawi, have been working with Sand Dams Worldwide and our partners Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD) since 2020. During that time, they have faced numerous delays to their project, most notably from the COVID-19 pandemic, but also from cyclones and droughts. Despite these challenges, the community have completed their first sand dam and agricultural training and are now looking forward to the benefits.

Fachi Bram, Nyanthumbi's Development Committee Chair, and Diana Yohane, Committee Member, explain what life was like before their project, and the difference they are already seeing.

Diana describes how *"for the whole village, more than 2,000 people, we had one borehole. So, we had to wake up very early around 2am to go and sit there because people had already begun to queue. We would then come back at 11am and sometimes it could take even up to 12 hours."*

She further explains that travelling at night *"was dangerous, we could meet robbers who might attack us at that time, but for the sake of water we had to go."* This was not the only danger. Due to using dirty river water, waterborne diseases were also a problem: *"We would experience cholera and other diseases,"* explains Diana.

Fachi also tells how the lack of nearby clean water would impact them in other ways: *"Most of the farming activities, they*

were not done in the way they could be, because we spent so long getting water. When we get back we are tired and cannot work. So poverty enters into the house. We do not have enough food. School becomes difficult because the kids cannot go to school because they are ill from the water." Because of this, Fachi explains how *"we played a big part in the construction of the dam, as we know we will have benefits."*

These benefits are now starting to be seen. Once the sand dam fully matures the community will have ample water to use, and the agricultural training that CARD has been providing is already having a profound impact.

Fachi explains how *"CARD has now supported us with fast maturing crops, which we can harvest before the droughts come, or before they are washed away, so now we are able to feed our families."*

Diana also describes how *"I have 0.4 hectares. Sometimes I could harvest 6 or 8 bags (each 50kg). Now I can harvest over 22 bags, just from my small farm."*

Importantly, though, this is just the start for Nyanthumbi's community members.

Fachi explains how *"We have plans. We can use the income (from the new crop varieties) for paying school fees, starting businesses and for feeding our families. Now these activities are finished, we have a sand dam, we have trees, we have agriculture, it is a circle, all the aspects together will give us a good life."*



Diana Yohane (above) and Fachi Bram (below) are already seeing benefits from their recently completed sand dam.



Varies Banda and her daughter.

Water and food for generations

Unity and peace

We spoke with farmer Varies Banda to find out how her community in Zimbabwe has responded to water scarcity challenges since the beginning of their sand dam project, and what impact this has had on her life as well as the lives of her children.

Varies, a 41-year-old mother of two, is a member of the Sifanjani Village community. She remembers a time when she dug for water on the riverbed that now feeds into the Nathi sand dam, which was constructed by the community. Like her, many within the community used to face the daily choice to either walk for 7km to the nearest water point for only one or two buckets of clean water, or instead dig scoop wells closer to home that yielded contaminated water.

Varies explained the difficulty of this choice: *“Most women dug wells along the river because of the many duties at home. Walking long distances for water would mean leaving our homes and children several times a day for long periods.”*

According to Varies, the daily struggle for water led to divisions between community

members who used to scramble for the little water that was available.

When Dabane Trust, our partners in the region, came to Sifanjani and the construction of the Nathi sand dam began, the community were ready to work but were hindered by the distrust created by prior water disputes, affecting productivity and teamwork.

As the dam construction project began though, leadership training was made available to all community members, who then gradually started working together more closely. What they intended to achieve as a group with the help of Dabane started becoming a clearer, collective goal.

Varies tells us, *“Before this sand dam, such teamwork was unheard of in this area... It was everyone for themselves.”*

As sand dam building activities progressed, the project participants also received training on health and hygiene. These sessions further revived the community spirit in the area, as members formed ‘health clubs’, which Varies says helped transformed her home: *“Everything that you see on display in my kitchen was bought as a result of the health clubs, where I learnt the importance of having a clean kitchen and clean utensils.”*

And now, as a result of the nearby availability of water, Varies has also set up a garden nearby the sand dam. With the produce grown in this garden, Varies can ensure that her family is provided with a nutritious diet. Sometimes, she is even able to give her neighbours some of her surplus produce to eat, reflecting the renewed community unity and peace.

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My children eat healthy. This makes me very happy,

Varies Banda,
Community member,
Zimbabwe

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From a dry land into a green one

Bergi's story

The capacity of sand dams to regreen areas offers a wonderful representation of the change they can influence. Speaking with community members in southern Ethiopia, we learn how peoples' lives are changed by sand dams just as much as their local environment is.

Mukecha is a small sub-district located in Benatsemay (in the South Omo zone of southern Ethiopia), home to around 2,200 people who rely heavily on rearing livestock to support their livelihoods.

For a long time, those in Mukecha did not have access to a clean and adequate water supply, so were forced to dig scoop holes in river channels. This meant daily journeys of up to 3km for most households to collect from an often-contaminated water supply, leading many to suffer from waterborne diseases.

In 2021, Mukecha partnered with Sand Dams Worldwide, and our in-country partners Action For Development (AFD), to construct a sand dam on a nearby river. That dam is now providing clean water to the local community less than 30 minutes journey from their homes. This has had a profound impact on the lives of the locals, for whom the benefits have included safer journeys to collect water, a reduced prevalence of waterborne diseases, and more time to spend on their other productive daily activities.

Among the locals of the Mukecha community is Bergi Bura, a 46-year-old with eight children who described the sand dam project as *"a gift from God"*.

Bergi says: *"Women and girls were expected to wake up early, sometimes as early as 5:00am, to fetch water over long distances"* - a journey which she described as unsafe and inadequate to meet all of their household water needs.

In Bergi's local culture, fetching water is a responsibility that falls predominantly on women, who would often have to walk for up to four hours a day while their children remained at home. After this journey, women were often exhausted and struggled to complete their other daily responsibilities, such as collecting firewood and cooking. This was further compounded by issues of sickness caused by contaminated sources, as well as the water needs of peoples' livestock.

She told us that she now sees the struggle and drudgery of fetching water, particularly in the dry season, as a thing of the past.

Bergi also shares her gratitude for the sand dam project in Mukecha, with fellow female community members relieved of the great burden of having to fetch water: *"I am thankful to God and those who supported us that adequate water is now available in my community"* says Bergi.

The community members are now much less vulnerable to disease outbreaks than ever before. They are also benefiting from AFD's agricultural training, which have helped the community to get the most out of their sand dam project and affect positive change in terms of their land and surrounding natural environment. Bergi put it best when she concluded that their local area *"is changing from a dry land into a green one"*.



Bergi Bura collecting water.

Leave a legacy of health, hope and opportunity

We know that your first priority when making a Will is to provide for those closest to you. As well as remembering family and friends, some people also decide to leave a gift to a special cause, to make a lasting difference to something they really care about.

Sand dams provide a lifelong supply of water for people living in drylands.

Water changes everything. It brings health, hope and opportunity. **Having a water source nearby means that people, especially women and children, can save up to 12 hours a day.** Their lives are completely transformed, for generations to come.

It takes a great many small components to build a sand dam. Whatever you can afford, we will turn it into something important and tangible, that will transform lives for years to come.



If you have any questions about leaving a gift in your Will, please contact Judith Eaton at judith@sanddamsworldwide.org.uk or call 07596 225 677. Alternatively, tick the relevant box on the form overleaf, and return to us at Sand Dams Worldwide, 7-14 Great Dover Street London, SE1 4YR.

Please donate

Here are some ways in which your donations could help people living in drylands to build sand dams, and make a living from farming:

- **£15** could provide a claw bar, an essential tool in sand dam building
- **£25** could provide a community with 4 bags of cement for their sand dam
- **£30** could provide a dryland farmer with drought-tolerant seeds, to grow a reliable source of fresh food for their children
- **£40** could provide a wheelbarrow, used to move heavy materials on the dam site
- **£60** could provide a roll of barbed wire to reinforce a sand dam
- **£100** could provide 500 seedlings and a spray pump, to protect the trees from insects
- **£120** could provide a wheelbarrow and 10 bags of cement
- **£160** could provide a full set of 25 metal shovels
- **£540** could equip a community with access to all of the tools and seeds they need to start a tree nursery
- **£630** could provide all the barbed wire and steel bars needed to strengthen and reinforce a sand dam during construction
- **£1700** could provide a community with a water pump and shallow well to safely extract drinking water from the sand dam

My choice is: _____

Our reference: 444

Legacy giving

- I would like to find out more about leaving a gift to Sand Dams Worldwide in my Will.

Gift Aid adds 25%!

Gift Aid makes every £1 worth £1.25 at no extra cost to you.
Tick 'yes' to make your donation worth 25% more.

giftaid it Yes ☐
No ☐

I confirm I am a UK taxpayer and I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. If it is less, I understand that I will be responsible for refunding the difference. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give in the future or for the past 4 years until further notice.

Signed:

Date:

In order for us to reclaim tax on your donation, please provide your name and postal address below:

Title:	First name:
Last name(s):	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Phone:	Email:

Your support is vital to people living in drylands, so they can provide their families with clean water for life. We would love to send you information by telephone, text message and email on our fundraising appeals, events, expeditions and volunteering opportunities, so you can continue to support some of the world's poorest people to transform their lives. If you are happy with this, please write your email address and/or phone number above. We promise never to sell or swap your details and you can change your preferences at any time by calling +44 (0)7596 225 677, leaving a message at +44 (0)20 3096 7861 or emailing supportercare@sanddamsworldwide.org.uk. To read our full Privacy Statement, visit www.sanddamsworldwide.com/privacy-policy or you can request a copy by post. If you would prefer to stop receiving mailings from us, or would like to reduce the number of communications you receive, please let us know, either by return post, email or telephone, and we will act on your request immediately.

Our reference: 444

Your generous donations are transforming lives.

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**Since 2002, Sand Dams Worldwide
has supported over 1 million people
in dryland communities to build over
1,250 sand dams, and to plant over
1.1 million trees. Find out more at
www.sanddamsworldwide.org.uk**